

INTERVIEW: ANTHONY DANIELS

While he was on holiday, following the end of production on *The Empire Strikes Back*, Tony Daniels agreed to give up some of his vacation time to give the Fan Club an interview. We talked with him regarding his training and his early desires to act, as well as about how making *The Empire Strikes Back* differed from making *Star Wars*. Below are excerpts from that conversation.

SW You started out studying for a career in business.

AD Yes. When I was six, I came home from school one day and said I wanted to be a milkman. It was a very early passion I had. I think my parents locked me in a dark room for a couple of days, so I got over that. When I was six and a half, I came home and said I wanted to be an actor and again they locked me in a dark room for two days. But this time it didn't have any effect and from that day on I was kind of obsessive about theater. My parents were really beginning to worry. The only thing I was interested in was theater and theatrical situation, so eventually they sent me off to a boarding school to flatten my character. Unfortunately, that particular school had quite a good drama society. So again that became the only thing—I hated the school and was really miserable, and the one thing I counted on was the productions which we would do twice a year. At the end of my school career my parents kept asking, "What do you want to do for a job?" and I said, "Well, I'd like to be an actor." They said that was for burns and that I should become a lawyer. So I decided to join a law firm as an apprentice. Right from the word go I was appalling. I took a lady to court for a divorce case and got bored waiting around. I went for a cup of coffee and when I got back, she had actually lost the divorce in my absence. It had gone through when I wasn't there. It was kind of embarrassing. When I was twenty-one I had to admit to myself that I really wasn't cut out for it. I studied management for three years, but during that time I did a lot of amateur acting. One night I was standing there moaning, saying I wanted to be a real actor, and someone turned to me and said, "Why aren't you; why don't you do it?" Suddenly these glaring lights came on, the choir sang, and the orchestra played. It was a moment of truth in a grubby little backstreet theater in suburban country town in England. That was the beginning of it all.

SW What had you done before *Star Wars*?

AD In England we don't have a big film industry. I'd only been an actor two years when *Star Wars* came about, and at that time I'd only done a small film, some radio, and a lot of theater and TV.

SW What was the film?

AD *City of Dead* for the New York City Opera Company. It was a multi-media production and it was filmed in Belgium. We had a lot of fun. When I came to do *Star Wars* I found it very difficult because I couldn't understand what all the waiting around was for.

Theater is generally very efficient—filming isn't. There is a lot of sitting around and boredom; a lot of tension being dissipated, and never any sense of performance because you never have any audience. You just have a lot of very bored-looking technicians and cameramen who have seen it a million times and don't want to see it again. It's like being a guide on the Universal Studios tour.

SW How did you come up for the role of C-3PO?

AD I don't know. I didn't want it. My agent suggested me because she got a list of qualifications 3PO needed to have. He had to be small, and reasonably good at mime. I said I didn't want to do it. She practically dragged me screaming to see George Lucas. I met George, and of course he has a very winning personality which helped a lot. A lot of Ralph McQuarrie's production paintings were hanging on the wall and I said to George, "Is your film going to look like this?" He said, "Sure." At that point I really got



interested in the project—I liked the look of those drawings. We talked for an hour and he sent me a script. When I read it, the character I liked the most and found to be the kindest, the funniest, the sweetest person was this extraordinary robot that I had been asked to play. I got terribly excited at this point. I went back to see George. I walked in and the secretary asked me when I was going to be cast. I said, "What?" She said, "When can you go get cast in plaster for the costume?" I told her that I hadn't been cast in the part yet and she said, "Oh!" I was very nervous and walked into George's office. He talked to me for about an hour, although not about the movie, and by the end of it I said, "Listen, can I play it?" He said, "Sure!" He had, in fact, decided earlier on, but I think he actually wanted to see if I wanted to do it. Quite frankly, you couldn't put up with playing that part unless you truly wanted to do it. So I think that was a necessary stipulation.

SW Was the script they sent you an early draft?

AD Yes, a very early one, a kind of blueprint.

SW Were you excited about playing C-3PO?

AD I thought it was going to be very glamorous. On my first trip to the studio, I stood with hardly any clothes on in a very cold room in November while two men threw wet plaster all over me. It took two weeks to do all of the molds and was a most unpleasant situation. First of all I had to be covered all over with Nivea Cream and Vaseline. It was a greasy plastic—horrible stuff—and it got hot and heavy and messy. At one point I was even wearing ladies' tights. They ended up with a facsimile of my body and head. It was so unlovely.

SW How long were you actually shooting *Star Wars*?

AD Fifteen weeks. I worked on the first and last shooting days. The very last shot I did was with Gary Kurtz shooting the scene with C-3PO and R2-D2 in the escape pod and 3PO says, "The damage doesn't look so bad from out here." The first thing I did was about programming binary loadlifters.

SW Was the costume very hot?

AD No, actually I was so cold that they used to wrap me up in Sandpeople costumes. The costume was so shiny it reflected the sunshine so I used to stand there and shake with cold. The weather was erratic—wonderful one day and freezing the next. It made everybody pull together. I fell over in the desert once. It was very fine sand and with seventy-five pounds of superstructure I was a little top-heavy. One day the sand just gave way under one foot and bang! My fall looked horrible in *The Making of Star Wars*, very nasty, but I didn't hurt myself.

SW What did you do between *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*?

AD I spent some time in America doing various things like footprint ceremonies at the Chinese Theater, *The Making of Star Wars*, *The Osmond Show*, all of which took considerable time. I did a bit of comedy. I love doing comedy.

SW Did your character expand from the first film?

AD That's a very difficult question—do these characters expand; does Princess Leia expand? They expand if you fill in some details that weren't there, but 3PO's character is transparent. I think that's why he's liked by so many people. There's no guile, no deviousness, no mystery. He is so obvious and he always states the obvious. If everyone is cowering back as a meteor hits the window, he is the one who says, "Look, a meteor." In the wrong circumstances that can be very irritating, but hopefully it can be funny too.

SW Did 3PO get all the best lines?

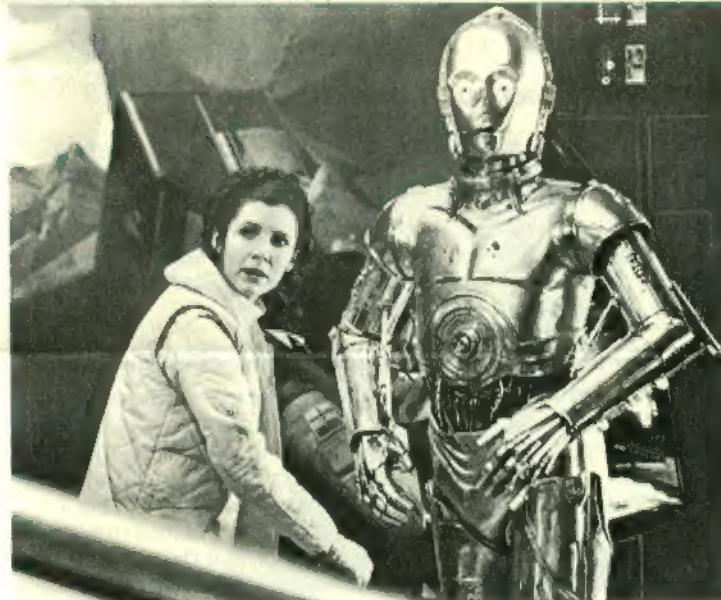
AD Yes. There are times when I didn't know how some of the others could say their lines with a straight face. If I have a bad line I can hide behind the mask. I remember particularly the line, "Listen to them R2. They're dying and it's all my fault." Even with the mask on I cringed. But the only way to do it is over the top, to ham it up, and I quite like the way it came out.

SW Were there differences between the two productions?

AD We had a new director, Irvin Kershner, who, I think, finds it very easy to communicate with the actors. He is very excitable. Also, the shooting schedule was a bit longer this time. The first film shot for fifteen weeks, while this one shot for eighteen weeks, part of that time in Norway. They didn't take me to Norway because the 3PO costume would literally freeze up in

that kind of cold.

This time was better because people knew they were on some sort of winner with *The Empire Strikes Back*. You only had to look at the script to see that it was very, very good. Most times watching a scene in the studio is very dull, especially for the thirtieth take. But there were some scenes where people were actually crowding in to watch. There was definitely an air of excitement about this project.



SW How was working with the other actors?

AD I think you should ask them what it's like working with me. I must be impossible to work with because it is very hard to hear what I say; you can't see my eyes. Eye contact is very important—you look at somebody and you have a big message there. Well, they can't see my eyes and I can't see theirs. I bump into them, I hurt them, I jab them with my elbows, and I clank. It can't be much fun working with a robot. Also, I have a prettier costume than they do, and I glitter. It's a physical thing—if you stand two people on a stage, one wearing a white suit and one wearing a black suit, people will look at the one in the white suit. If you turn one of those suits into gold and make him walk around like a demented lobster being put in a boiling pot, then people are going to look at that. So, there is all that to get used to, but they are very good about it.

SW Wasn't C-3PO originally supposed to have a Brooklyn accent?

AD Yes, but he seems to work out better as the butler type. I get letters from people who say they would like to have 3PO as a waiter in their house or as a butler or servant.

SW How would you compare *The Empire Strikes Back* as a movie to *Star Wars*?

AD The trouble is that no one will believe me if I say that *Empire* is better. They would think I was being paid to say it. I never expected it to be better, but it is better.

SW What are you looking forward to next?

AD I just bought a house. I've been in America three times in the last three weeks, and I want to go home and take all the wallpaper off the walls because the man who sold it to me had different taste—it is horrible. On the *Star Wars* scene, there are the radio dramatizations coming up and I did a pair of episodes of *Sesame Street* as 3PO a few weeks ago in New York. People will have to watch for that in January and

March. The delayed *Muppet Show* where the Muppets meet the *Star Wars* people will tape in January. It was delayed because of the strikes in England. Luke and Chewbacca are there, along with Artoo and 3PO. After that, who knows what I'll be doing? When I'm not doing other work, I sometimes go to science fiction conventions. It's great fun to meet people who have seen the film forty times more than I have—I've seen it three times. Most of them know more about the film than I do and it's a little embarrassing. I should admit the first one I was invited to was a *Star Trek* convention and I don't know quite why they asked me. It turned out to be a success. That is what I do now, chat to the people, and it's amazing the depth of interest. What I love is how they all dress up. Some of the questions I get asked are a little difficult, but I'm learning to cope with them. It's nice to have that audience reaction.

I'm not the sort of actor who people come running up to saying you can star in this or that movie in 1983 or 1984. I sit at home like everyone else. My career has its highs and lows all the time, but they kind of even out in the middle—overall it's been quite good.

PEN PAL SERVICE

In an effort to increase member activity, the OSWFC is now offering a pen pal service. This is an opportunity for members to increase communication with other members. Sharing ideas on a common interest can be a wonderful way to get to know new people from all parts of the country and the world.

To become a pen pal simply send a self-addressed stamped envelope, or, if located outside of the United States, send a self-addressed envelope with an International Response Coupon, to the club's address, being sure to write "Pen Pal" on the outer envelope. When we receive your letter, we will send you a pen pal form. Fill out and mail us the completed form and we will match you up with your optimum pen pal. Each of you will receive a copy of the other's form so that you can begin corresponding. As always, when you write to the fan club, include your name, address, and Force number and please remember to type or print clearly.

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q When will the novel, *The Empire Strikes Back*, be released? Are there any other Empire publications that will be released between now and June 1980?

A The novelization of *The Empire Strikes Back* will be released in April 1980. An over-sized and illustrated reader's edition will be released in July. Both will be available from Ballantine Books.

Other publications coming out include, from Random House, *The Empire Strikes Back Storybook* and the *Star Wars* comics from Marvel which will become *The Empire Strikes Back* comics. There will also be a special, large edition of *The Empire Strikes Back* comics. Paradise Press will continue to publish monthly poster magazines, and will be preparing a souvenir theatrical brochure.

Q How many production paintings did Ralph McQuarrie create for *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*, and will they ever be available in book form?

A Ralph McQuarrie created twenty-four production illustrations for *Star Wars* and forty-nine for *The Empire Strikes Back*. *The Empire Strikes Back Portfolio* will be published in the summer of 1980 and will contain twenty-four of McQuarrie's paintings from *Empire*. *The Art of The Empire Strikes Back* will also contain much of

McQuarrie's work, along with that of many other artists, and will be published in the fall of 1980.

Q Can you provide us with biographical information on John Williams? Also, what film and TV scores has he composed other than the music for *Star Wars* and *The Empire Strikes Back*?

A John Williams was born in New York in 1932. He studied at the University of California at Los Angeles, and in New York at the Juilliard School of Music with Rosina Lhevinne.

He has twice received the American Academy of Television Arts & Sciences' Emmy Award for the "Best Musical Composition," and the British Academy of Film and Television Arts Award for best original score in 1976. He has been nominated for an Oscar by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences thirteen times. John Williams has received the Academy Award three times: for *Fiddler on the Roof* in 1972, for *Jaws* in 1976, and for *Star Wars* in 1978. He has also composed much music for television, especially for *Alcoa Theatre*, *Kraft Theatre*, and *Playhouse 90*. One of his most familiar television themes is the music from the TV series, *Lost in Space*.

Williams' symphonic works have been performed by many major American orchestras, including those of Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, Houston and St. Louis. His *First Symphony* was premiered in 1966 by the Houston Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Andre Previn, and presented again in London with the London Symphony Orchestra in July 1972. He has also recently composed a violin concerto. In January, he accepted the position of conductor to the world-famous Boston Pops Orchestra. Also, he was recently signed to compose the music for the movie *Inchon*.

To say that John Williams has been a prolific composer is an understatement. He has composed the music for over fifty films. Chronologically, in reverse order, they are: *The Empire Strikes Back*; *1941*; *Dracula*; *Quintet*; *Meteor*; *Superman*; *Jaws II*; *The Fury*; *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*; *Black Sunday*; *Midway*; *Missouri Breaks*; *Family Plot*; *Jaws*; *The Eiger Sanction*; *The Towering Inferno*; *Earthquake*; *Sugarland Express*; *Conrack*; *Cinderella Liberty*; *The Paper Chase*; *The Man Who Loved*



Cat Dancing; *The Long Goodbye*; *Tom Sawyer* (musical supervisor); *The Poseidon Adventure*; *Pete and Tillie*; *Images*; *The Cowboys*; *Fiddler on the Roof* (musical director); *Jane Eyre*; *The Reivers*; *Goodbye Mr. Chips* (musical director and supervisor); *Daddy's Gone A Hunting*; *Valley of the Dolls*; *Fitzwilly*; *A Guide for the Married Man*; *Penelope*; *Not With My Wife You Don't!*; *The Plainsman*; *How To Steal a Million*; *The Rare Breed*; *John Goldfarb, Please Come Home*; *None But the Brave*; *The Killers*; *Gidget Goes to Rome*; *Diamond Head*; *The Bachelor Flat*; *The Secret Ways*; *Because They're Young*; and his first film, *I Passed for White*.

EMPIRE PROGRESS REPORT

During the Christmas season, a new trailer for *The Empire Strikes Back*, showing more of the new locations, vehicles, and characters being introduced in the film played in over 1,200 theatres across the United States and the United Kingdom. For those who missed seeing it, still another trailer will be released to theaters at Easter time.

The Empire Strikes Back is nearing completion, and has been edited by Paul Hirsch and his team. Final work on the many effects needed for the film is being completed by Industrial Light and Magic's team of special effects wizards, headed up by Brian Johnson and Richard Edlund. Ben Burtt and the sound department are hard at work creating the sounds, noises, and dialogue needed for the film's creatures and machines. In January John Williams and the London Symphony Orchestra finished recording his new score for *The Empire Strikes Back*.

Plans have changed since last issue, and it now seems that the world premiere of *The Empire Strikes Back* will take place in Washington, D.C., on 17 May 1980, and will open across the United States and Canada on 21 May, at over 100 theatres, all of which will be showing the film in 70mm and Dolby stereo. The European premiere will take place on 21 May in London and the film will open in the United Kingdom on 22 May.

This article concludes our series of "Empire Progress Reports." The May issue of *Bantha Tracks* will contain a special preview of *The Empire Strikes Back*, complete with stills from the film. Also in the May issue will be an announcement on the third film in the *Star Wars* saga.



PREVIEW OF COMING ATTRACTIONS

To be mailed out just before the release of *The Empire Strikes Back*, the next issue of *Bantha Tracks* will be a special one. Currently scheduled for inclusion is an interview with George Lucas, a full page of photos from *Empire*, and an article on the special effects created for the film. Don't miss this issue. Coming your way, May 1980!

800-5-21-1980

Since the beginning of February, a special *Star Wars* telephone line has been in operation, giving information on *The Empire Strikes Back*. Fans calling this toll-free number will receive messages from either Luke Skywalker, Han Solo, C-3PO, or Darth Vader. The messages will change every few weeks.

The telephone number, 800-5-21-1980, is the date on which *The Empire Strikes Back* will be released across the country, May 21, 1980.

Unfortunately, this number is only good in the United States. An attempt is being made to set up a similar telephone line in Canada.

INTRODUCING: LANDO CALRISSIAN

While attempting to escape from Imperial forces, the Millennium Falcon travels to the planet Bespin, a gas giant in the Bespin system. The ship lands on Cloud City, a mining colony seemingly floating above the gaseous surface of the planet. Governing the mining colony is Lando Calrissian.

Lando is an "old buddy" of Han Solo's, and was the original owner of the Millennium Falcon. Han feels that Lando is a con-artist and scoundrel, but when he offers them the hospitality of Cloud City, Han and the others accept.



This new addition to the *Star Wars* saga is portrayed by Billy Dee Williams, noted for his fine performances opposite Diana Ross in *Mahogany* and *Lady Sings the Blues*. Growing up in New York's Harlem district, Williams studied acting at the Actor's Workshop under Sidney Poitier, and appeared opposite Angela Lansbury in the New York production of *A Taste of Honey*. His film credits include *The Last Angry Man*, *The Out-of-Towners*, and *The Bingo Long Travelling All-Stars and Motor Kings*. His most recent stage success was as Dr. Martin Luther King in *I Have a Dream*.

RENEWAL INFORMATION

Many members have expressed concern about when their memberships will expire. The date given on your mailing label is that of the last issue you'll receive under your current subscription. In other words, if your label says "Feb 80" this is your last issue and you must renew your membership to continue receiving *Bantha Tracks*.

For the renewal fee of \$4.00 (\$5.00 is non-U.S.), you will receive an additional year's subscription to *Bantha Tracks* and the new, all-*The Empire Strikes Back* membership kit. This kit contains a special poster, decal, several photos from the film, and much more. As before, none of this material will be available for sale to nonmembers.

Future issues of *Bantha Tracks* will contain interviews with members of the cast and crew of *The Empire Strikes Back*, a question-and-answer column, articles on costuming and special effects, and announcements of upcoming contests and special events. Look for the "Preview of Coming Attractions" elsewhere in this issue for details of what to expect next issue.

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